

## CHAPTER 5

### *Al-Madīnah: The Food*

(REVEALED AT MADĪNAH: 16 *sections*; 120 *verses*)

The name of this chapter is taken from the mention of a demand for *food* — “the daily bread” — on the part of the followers of “Jesus Christ”, to which reference is made towards the end of this chapter. The chapter deals with the Christians in particular and the adoption of this name might be with a view to express the Christian love of the dainties of this life.

This chapter stands in almost the same relation to the last as the 3rd to the 2nd. Thus, while the 4th chapter deals chiefly with the hypocrites the 5th deals with those who had assumed open enmity to Islām, being interspersed here and there with directions for the Muslims. Again, while the 4th chapter deals with the question of Jewish disobedience, this gives prominence to the Christian transgressions due to their inordinate worldly love, this distinction being made plain in the concluding portions of the two chapters.

The chapter opens with an exhortation to the Muslims to remain true to their obligations. This injunction is followed by certain details relating to the performance of the pilgrimage, to foods and to social relations with other people and by the announcement that the *Dīn* (i.e. the way of life as prescribed by Allāh) was finalized in Islām. The second section, which calls attention to the duty of uprightness, is, as it were, a caution against laying too much stress upon details of the law to the utter neglect of the inner qualities, which make the real human being. The third section speaks of the covenants made with the Jews and the Christians, and of the violation of their covenant by the Christians in assigning a Divine dignity to a mere mortal. The fourth section takes up the Jewish violation of the covenant, at the very outset of their national life, and points out the evil consequences of their disobedience. The fifth section, opening with a lesson to the Jews in Cain’s aggression, plainly points towards the end to the punishment of the Jews who were now engaged in making war upon the Prophet, and the subject of

the punishment of similar offences is continued in the sixth section. The seventh speaks of the relation of the Qur'ânic revelation to previous revelations, and points out that this final revelation is really the fulfilment and perfection of all those revelations. The eighth section warns the Muslims of the hostile attitude of the Jews and the Christians and those who apostatize, the subject being continued in the ninth, which speaks of their mockery of the Muslim way of life as prescribed by Allâh. The tenth introduces the subject of Christian deviation from the truth. While the eleventh shows that the Qur'ân is not unjust to them on account of their enmity towards Islâm, valuing the meekness of monks and priests among them, and recognizing their nearness to Islâm in contrast with the Jews and the polytheists. The three sections that follow are specially addressed to the believers, while hinting at Christian disregard of the middle course and of their aggression against the Muslims. The twelfth section, while warning the Muslims on the one hand of such practices as monkery, which required a human being to deprive himself even of lawful things, cautions them on the other against the use of impure drugs, such as intoxicating liquors. And the acquisition of property by illegal means, such as gambling, the two besetting sins of Christian nations, and requires obedience and regard of duty to be made the main principle of action. The thirteenth section lays stress on the security of the Ka'bah, containing a prophetic allusion to the designs of powerful Christian nations. The fourteenth section, containing further directions for the Muslims, lays special stress on the gravity of the sin of polytheism, which had led the Christians farthest away from the truth, notwithstanding their proximity to Islâm. The two concluding sections of the chapter deal with the Christian religion more plainly. Attention is drawn in the fifteenth to the Christian love of this life and their being subjected to an unprecedented punishment as a result of their materialistic tendencies. The sixteenth, which is the last section, contains a plain condemnation of the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus out of the mouth of that prophet himself. And makes it clear that this doctrine found way into the Christian religion after his death and gives hope of their finally finding protection in Islâm.

A consideration of the topics dealt with in this chapter and the opinions of different authorities, lead us to the almost certain conclusion that this chapter

follows in the order of revelation, as it does in arrangement. The last chapter and the main portion of it were revealed within 5–7 Hijrah. The tendency of some Christian critics to ascribe verses condemning certain Jewish or Christian doctrines to a period when political relations with these people became strained is to be deprecated, for, as a matter of fact, the Qur’ân did not deny the good in these religions at any time. Nor did it ever approve of their errors. For instance, it is in an early Makkan revelation that we find the Christian doctrine of the sonship of Jesus condemned in the severest terms (19:88– 92), while it is here, in a late Madînah revelation, that we find the Christians praised on account of their meekness.

There is, however, one verse in this chapter which belongs to a much later period than the main portion of the chapter, the date of the revelation of which can be fixed with certainty. It is the third verse, and it speaks of the perfection of religion in Islâm. Of its revelation in the Holy Prophet’s last pilgrimage to Makkah in the year 10 A.H. there is not the least doubt, and, further, there is the clearest testimony that it was revealed on the 9th *Dhu-l-Hijjah* in that year. This was when the Holy Prophet was on the plain of ‘Arafât (Bukhârî 2:32).

### SECTION 1: Perfection of Religion in Islâm

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

I seek the assistance of Allâh the Beneficent Creator the Merciful bounty giver.

**1** O you who believe, fulfill the obligations.<sup>a</sup> The cattle quadrupeds are allowed to you except that which is recited to you, not violating the prohibition against game when you are on the pilgrimage.<sup>b</sup> Surely Allâh orders what He pleases.

**2** O you who believe, violate not the signs of Allâh,<sup>a</sup> nor the Sacred Month, nor the offerings, nor the victims with garlands,<sup>b</sup> nor those repairing to the Sacred House seeking the grace and pleasure of their *Rabb*. And when you are free from pilgrimage obligations, then hunt. And let not hatred of a people — because they hindered you from the Sacred Mosque — incite you to transgress. And help one

another in righteousness and piety, and help not one another in sin and aggression,  
c and keep your duty to Allâh. Surely Allâh is Severe in requiting (evil).

**1a.** Respect for all *covenants, contracts, agreements, leagues, treaties, and engagements*, all of which are included in the significance of the word *‘uqûd* (sing. *‘aqd, a tie*) (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane), and also of all Divine ordinances given for the welfare of the individual and society, is the very first necessity of social relations. The word includes *the covenants imposed by God as well as the mutual agreements made by men* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). Thus respect for *law*, religious as well as temporal, is taught here.

**1b.** The prohibition of game during pilgrimage is mentioned in connection with the security of the Ka‘bah in section 13, so that even wild animals are secure during the time; see 95a. The words *except that which is recited to you* relate to the prohibited foods mentioned already in 2:173, 6:145, 16:115, and detailed further in verse 3 here.

**2a.** *Sha‘âir* is plural of *sha‘îrah* which means a *sign* (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur‘ân* (Dictionary of Qur‘ân), by *Shaikh* Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî). It is derived from *sha‘ara* meaning *he knew* a thing, and by *sha‘â‘ir* Allâh are therefore meant *matters through which the knowledge of Allâh is obtained*. According to *Jâmi‘ al-Bayân fî Tafsîr al-Qur‘ân* (Commentary), by Imâm Abû Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Jarîr al-Ṭabarî, it signifies *all duties imposed by God on man* and thus includes all Divine ordinances, obligations, commandments and prohibitions. *Hasan* says *sha‘â‘ir Allâh* means *dîn Allâh* or *the religion of Allâh*. Rites and ceremonies in connection with the pilgrimage and places where these ceremonies are performed are also known by this name. Hence the *Safâ* and the *Marwah* are also called *sha‘â‘ir Allâh* in 2:158.

**2b.** *Hady* is plural of *hadyah*, and means *what is driven* (to Makkah), and *qalâ‘id* is plural of *qilâdah*, meaning *a necklace* or *what is put upon the neck of an animal* that is brought as an offering to Makkah for sacrifice (*Lisân al-‘Arab* (Dictionary), by ‘Allâmah Abu-l-Faḍl Jamâl al-Dîn Muḥammad ibn Mukarram and the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane), and hence also the *animal which is*

*made to wear a garland.* The word *qalâ'id* as a description of such animals is used to intensify respect for them, because they bear a clear mark showing that they are meant to be sacrificed. It should be noted that only camels are made to wear garlands, while *hady* includes all kinds of animals brought as offering.

**2c.** The principle laid down here as to uprightness of conduct in dealing even with those whom one hates is laudable, and the international code of the modern world stands sorely in need of such a principle of uprightness. Requiring equal treatment for all nations — for those whom we hate and for those whom we love — Islâm alone can serve as an international law.

**3** Forbidden to you is that which dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that on which any other name than that of Allâh has been invoked, and the strangled (animal), and that beaten to death, and that killed by a fall, and that killed by goring with the horn, and that which wild beasts have eaten — except what you slaughter;<sup>a</sup> and that which is sacrificed on stones set up<sup>b</sup> (for idols), and that you seek to divide by arrows;<sup>c</sup> that is a transgression. This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your *Dîn*, so fear them not, and fear Me. This day have I finalised for you your religion and completed My favour to you and chosen for you Islâm as a *Dîn*.<sup>d</sup> But whoever is compelled by hunger, not inclining wilfully to sin, then surely Allâh is Forgiving, Merciful.

**3a.** The exception may apply to all the five classes. The infinitive noun *tadhkiyah* means *causing the natural heat to pass forth*. Technically, it indicates a particular mode of slaughtering (*Al-Mufradât fî Ghariib al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî and the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane); and the meaning is that if an animal partly eaten by wild beasts is found while yet alive, and is slaughtered in the proper manner, its flesh is allowed.

**3b.** According to Ibn Juraij, these were certain stones which were set up around the Ka'bah, over or near which it was customary to kill animals as offerings to certain idols, their blood being sprinkled and flesh laid on the stones (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî).

**3c.** *Istaqsamtu-hû* means, according to *Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî, *I asked him to divide*, and he adds: “Then it is used to signify *dividing*”. If this significance be adopted, the *azlâm* (lit. *arrows without a head and without a feather*) would mean the headless arrows of the game of hazard. The Arabs played with such arrows for division of the flesh of a slaughtered camel bought on credit (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). This significance is favoured by the context, for it prohibits dividing flesh of slaughtered animals by means of certain arrows with which was played the game of chance called *maisir*. A comparison with 6:145, where slaying in other than Allâh's name is called a transgression, as here dividing by arrows is called a transgression, also shows this to be the correct significance. Probably animals devoted to idols were divided by arrows when slain. According to others, however, *istaqsama* means *he sought to know what was allotted to him* by means of the *azlâm*. When one of them desired to make a journey, or to get married, or to perform some other important affair, he drew out arrows, on one of which was written “My *Rabb* has commanded me”, on a second, “My *Rabb* has forbidden me”, while a third arrow was blank. He did or refrained from doing the desired thing according to the arrow which came forth, repeating the operation if a blank arrow came out (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî).

**3d.** External testimony as to the late revelation of this verse has already been quoted in the introductory note to this chapter. The very subject-matter of the verse shows that it must have been revealed towards the close of the Holy Prophet's life, and hence it is held by all authorities that no precept was revealed after this. The Prophet died eighty-one or eighty-two days after its revelation (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî). This verse is a clear testimony to the finalisation of *Dîn-ul-Islâm*, no such claim being made by any other book or devotional way of life. Just before Muḥammad, the religion created by Constantine, “Jesus” had said: “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth” (Jn. 16:12, 13). The Prophet Muḥammad was thus the last of the prophets, because the *Dîn* being finalised, no prophet was needed after him.

**4** They ask you as to what is allowed them. Say: The good things are allowed to you, and what you have taught the beasts and birds of prey, training them to hunt — you teach them of what Allâh has taught you; so eat of that which they catch for you and mention the name of Allâh over it; and keep your duty to Allâh. Surely Allâh is Swift in reckoning.<sup>a</sup>

**5** This day (all) good things are made lawful for you. And the food of those who have been given the Book is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them.<sup>a</sup> And so are the chaste from among the believing women and the chaste from among those who have been given the Book before you,<sup>b</sup> when you give them their dowries, taking (them) in marriage, not fornicating nor taking them for paramours in secret. And whoever denies faith,<sup>c</sup> his work indeed is vain; and in the Hereafter he is of the losers.

**4a.** Game killed by means of beasts and birds of prey taught to hunt is allowed. When, however, the beast or the bird is sent after the prey, the name of Allâh should be mentioned. Game killed by an arrow or by a shot is allowed, subject to the same condition. In either case, if the game is not killed before it falls into the hands of the hunter, it should be slaughtered; if it is already killed, it is lawful in that condition.

## SECTION 2: **Duty of Uprightness**

**6** O you who believe, when you rise up for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands up to the elbows, and wipe your heads, and (wash) your feet up to the ankles. And if you are under an obligation,<sup>a</sup> then wash (yourselves). And if you are sick or on a journey, or one of you comes from the privy, or you have had contact with women and you cannot find water, betake yourselves to pure earth and wipe your faces and your hands therewith. Allâh desires not to place a burden on you but He wishes to purify you, and that He may complete His favour on you, so that you may give thanks.

**5a.** The question arises here whether the food of those who have been given the Book is lawful even when that food includes what is expressly unlawful according to the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân. The answer to this question must be given in the negative. A thing which is clearly prohibited cannot become lawful because it is offered by a Jew or a Christian. According to 'Abd Allâh ibn 'Abbâs (Companion) by *ta'âm* is here meant *dhabîhah* (Bukhârî 72:22). Thus animals slaughtered by the Jews or the Christians are allowed when slaughtered in the name of God. When an animal is not slaughtered in the name of God, it is prohibited according to some while others allow it. See further 6:121a where I quote Bukhârî 72:22, according to which the animal slaughtered by the People of the Book is disallowed only when the slaughterer is heard mentioning other than Allâh's name.

**5b.** Both the Jewish and the Christian laws do not compare well with the Islâmic law in this respect. In Islâm intermarriages with idol-worshippers are totally prohibited (2:221), but in the case of a people whose religion is based on a revealed book, in which category fall almost all the nations of the world, the taking of their women in marriage is expressly allowed. The giving away of Muslim women in marriage to followers of other religions is not, however, expressly mentioned, and practice from the earliest times is against it. Indeed, while women belonging to other religions would be happy in a Muslim household, because of the status and rights which Islâm confers on women, Muslim women in an alien household would be in a condition of distress, because they would lose the rights which they enjoy in Muslim society. It may be added that the law here given is not limited to the Jews and the Christians, but includes the followers of all religions based on revelation. Hence the law was extended to the Persians by the companions of the Holy Prophet. As for the Jewish law, see the Holy fabricated reconstructed man-made Bible in the book of Deuteronomy 7:3: "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son". Paul follows the Jewish law: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6:14).



**5c.** The *denial of faith* is variously explained. Some think it means *denial of Allâh*; others, *denial of the unity of Allâh*; while still others think that *faith* stands for *the revelation* of the Qur'ân.

**6a.** I.e., under an obligation to perform a total ablution; see 4:43b.

**7** And remember Allâh's favour on you and His covenant with which He bound you when you said: We have heard and we obey.<sup>a</sup> And keep your duty to Allâh. Surely Allâh knows what is in the breasts.

**8** O you who believe, be upright for Allâh, bearers of witness with justice; and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably. Be just; that is nearer to observance of duty. And keep your duty to Allâh. Surely Allâh is Aware of what you do.

**9** Allâh has promised to those who believe and do good deeds: For them is forgiveness and a mighty reward.

**10** And those who disbelieve and reject Our messages, such are the companions of the flaming fire.

**7a.** The reference in the covenant is generally supposed to be to the oath of fidelity taken by the Madînite at 'Aqabah, but some have taken it to be the acceptance of the law of Islâm, others consider it to be the evidence of human nature spoken of in 7:172, while still others understand by it the swearing of the allegiance at Hudaibiyah (*Jâmi' al-Bayân fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân* (Commentary), by Imâm Abû Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarîr al-Tabarî), which is also referred to in 48:10, 18.

**11** O you who believe, remember Allâh's favour on you when a people had determined to stretch out their hands against you, but He withheld their hands from you; and keep your duty to Allâh. And on Allâh let the believers rely.<sup>a</sup>

**11a.** The occasions on which the enemies of Islâm endeavoured to take away the life of the Prophet or to exterminate the Muslims are too numerous to mention here. The commentators, however, think that there is special reference to the attempt made by the Banî Nadîr on the life of the Holy Prophet.

### SECTION 3: *Nasârâh* Violation of the Covenant

**12** And certainly Allâh made a covenant with the Children of Isrâ'îl, and We raised up among them twelve chieftains.<sup>a</sup> And Allâh said: Surely I am with you. If you keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and believe in My messengers and assist them and offer to Allâh a goodly gift, I will certainly cover your evil deeds, and cause you to enter Gardens wherein rivers flow. But whoever among you disbelieves after that, he indeed strays from the right way.<sup>b</sup>

**13** But on account of their (Children of Isrâ'îl) breaking their covenant We cursed them and hardened their hearts. They alter the words from their places and neglect a portion of that whereof they were reminded. And you will always discover treachery in them excepting a few of them — so pardon them and forgive. Surely Allâh loves those who do good (to others).

**12a.** It is strange to find Rodwell adding a note here that the Prophet “invented these twelve leaders of tribes”, whereas they are clearly mentioned by name in Num. 1:5–15, and in the 16th verse they are called *princes of the tribes of their fathers*; while in the 44th verse we have: “And the princes of Israel, being twelve men”. And further, in Numbers 13:3–15 we again read of twelve *heads* of the Children of Israel having been sent to search the land of Canaan.

**12b.** The land was described by Joshua and Caleb as “a land which floweth with milk and honey” (Numbers 14:8).

**14** And with those who say, We are *Nasârâh*, We made a covenant,<sup>a</sup> but they neglected a portion of that whereof they were reminded so We stirred up enmity and hatred among them to the day of Resurrection. And Allâh will soon inform them of what they did.<sup>b</sup>

**15** O People of the Book, indeed Our Messenger has come to you, making clear to you much of that which you concealed of the Book and passing over much.<sup>a</sup> Indeed, there has come to you from Allâh, a Light and a clear Book,<sup>b</sup>

**16** Whereby Allâh guides such as follow His pleasure into the ways of peace, and brings them out of darkness into light by His will, and guides them to the right path.

**14a.** “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come” (John 16:12, 13). The kingdom of God so often spoken of in the Gospel is no other than the spiritual kingdom established by the Holy Prophet, the Gospel being in fact only the good news of his advent.

**14b.** The prophecy that there shall always be hatred and enmity between the various Christian peoples has proved true in all ages, and never more clearly than in our own day. They will find peace only when they accept Islâm.

**15a.** There were many truths which the Jews and the *Nasârâh* had lost, their scriptures not having remained free from corruption, and many which were to be met with in their books but which they did not act upon. Some of these which were of permanent value were revealed in the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân, but others — referred to in *passing over much* — had been given to them to suit only the requirements of the time when they were given and were not now needed. Or, the reference may be to the prophecies of the advent of the Holy Prophet, for the Qur’ân refers to only very few of them.

**15b.** Two things are here spoken of as having come from Allâh, a Light and a clear Book. The Light is the Prophet, and the Book, the Qur’ân. The Prophet is the greatest spiritual Light which ever dawned upon this earth. Hence he is called a light-giving sun: “O Prophet, surely We have sent thee as a witness, and a bearer of good news and a warner, and as an inviter to Allâh by His permission, and as a light-giving sun” (33:45, 46).

**17** They indeed disbelieve who say: Surely, Allâh — He is the Masîḥ, son of Maryam. Say; Who then could control anything as against Allâh when He wished to destroy the Masîḥ, son of Maryam, and his mother and all those on the earth?<sup>a</sup> And Allâh’s is the kingdom of the samâwât and the earth and what is between

them. He creates what He pleases. And Allâh is Possessor of power over all things.

**18** And the Jews and the Christians say: We are the sons of Allâh and His beloved ones. Say: Why does He then chastise you for your sins?<sup>a</sup> Nay, you are mortals from among those whom He has created. He forgives whom He pleases and chastises whom He pleases.<sup>b</sup> And Allâh's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, and to Him is the eventual coming.

**17a.** The meaning is that the Masîh and his mother Maryam, and all those who were then on the earth, tasted equally of death; hence the Masîh was an ordinary human being and not God, for if he had been God he would not have died. *In* sometimes signifies *idh* or *when* (*Mughnî al-Labîb* (Grammar), by Al-Shaikh Jamâl al-Dîn ibn Hishâm Al-Ansârî and the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane), and this is the significance here. It is a mistake to take it as referring to the future, for with the Masîh is mentioned Maryam and the whole generation then living, and their meeting death was undoubtedly a thing of the past.

**18a.** In the reconstructed Gospels it is said; "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). The Christians think they are the people spoken of here. The Jews considered themselves as the favourite nation, because they thought they were the only nation chosen by God for the gift of Divine revelation, to the exclusion of all other nations of the world. Thus they considered themselves friends of God. They are told that their sins were so great that they were punished for them even in this life. How could people sunk so deep in sins be friends of God or sons of God?

**18b.** It is in accordance with Divine laws that forgiveness and punishment are exercised, and the alleged atonement of "Christ" had brought about no change in that law.

**19** O People of the Book, indeed Our Messenger has come to you explaining to you after a cessation of the messengers,<sup>a</sup> lest you say: There came not to us a

bearer of good news nor a warner. So indeed a bearer of good news and a warner has come to you. And Allâh is Possessor of power over all things.

**19a.** Several centuries had elapsed since the appearance of any prophet in any country when the great Arabian Prophet made his appearance. No nation in the world claims the appearance of any messenger in it between the advent of “Jesus” Christ and that of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad. The world was, as it were, preparing itself for the advent of the greatest of all prophets, who was to be a messenger to all the nations of the world. Hence, the cessation of prophecy among all people of the world. The name of Khâlid is mentioned by some people, but there is no authentic Hadîth to this effect, nor any historical evidence showing that any prophet of that name had appeared after Jesus. On the other hand, there is an authentic Hadîth according to which the Holy Prophet said, speaking of Jesus Christ: “There has been no prophet between him and me” (Bukḥârî 21:48).

#### SECTION 4: Isrâ’îlites’ Violation of the Covenant

**20** And when Mûsâ said to his people: O my people, remember the favour of Allâh to you when He raised prophets among you and made you kings and gave you what He gave not to any other of the nations.<sup>a</sup>

**21** O my people, enter the Holy Land which Allâh has ordained for you and turn not your backs, for then you will turn back losers.

**20a.** There is no anachronism here. The Isrâ’îlites are here told that two favours had been bestowed upon them: (1) prophets were raised among them; (2) they were made kings. The reference need not be to the earlier history of the Isrâ’îlites, but to their history as dating from the time of Mûsâ, for the advent of Mûsâ had brought about an entire change both in their devotional and political status. Not only had two prophets, Mûsâ and Hârûn, already appeared among them, but with the Mûsâic law was laid down the basis of a dispensation which gave them promise of numerous prophets appearing among them. And politically they had no doubt already emerged as an independent nation, being masters of themselves and

no more slaves of their Egyptian masters. They had already acquired kingship, but the words as well contain a clear prophetic reference to their future career as a ruling nation. Devotional dominance combined with political supremacy was manifestly a favour which was not bestowed upon any of the other contemporary nations.

**22** They said: O Mûsâ, therein are a powerful people, and we shall not enter it until they go out from it; if they go out from it, then surely we will enter.<sup>a</sup>

**23** Two men of those who feared, on whom Allâh had bestowed a favour, said: Enter upon them by the gate, for when you enter it you will surely be victorious; and put your trust in Allâh, if you are believers.<sup>a</sup>

**24** They said: O Mûsâ, we will never enter it so long as they are in it; go therefore thou and your *Rabb*, and fight; surely here we sit.

**25** He said: My *Rabb*, I have control of none but my own self and my brother; so distinguish between us and the transgressing people.

**26** He said: It will surely be forbidden to them for forty years — they will wander about in the land. So grieve not for the transgressing people.<sup>a</sup>

**22a.** “All the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature” (Numbers 13:32). For the murmurings of the Israelites and their refusal to go against the enemy, see Numbers 14:1–4.

**23a.** “And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh ... spoke unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying ... If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land ... their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us, fear them not” (Numbers 14:6–9).

**26a.** “Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked Me see it” (Numbers 14:23). The forty years spoken of here represent the life of that generation.

## SECTION 5: Two sons of *Adam* – murderous plots against the Prophet

**27** And relate to them with truth the story of the two sons of *Âdam*, when they offered an offering, but it was accepted from one of them and was not accepted from the other. He said: I will certainly kill you. (The other) said: Allâh accepts only from the dutiful.<sup>a</sup>

**27a.** Some commentators are, however, of opinion that the reference is to two men from among the Isrâ'îlites, because every man may be spoken of as a son of Âdam (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî). But the whole story may be taken allegorically to refer to the Jewish plots against the Holy Prophet, where the Israelites may be taken for the aggressive and sinful brother and the Ismâ'îlites, as represented by the Holy Prophet, for the righteous one. It may be noted that in verse 11 we have a reference to the Jewish plots against the Prophet's life, and the two sections that follow are, as it were, parenthetical, reminding the Jews and the **Christians** of their covenants and their violation of them, and the subject of verse 11 is continued in this and the following section.

**28** If you stretch out your hand against me to kill me I shall not stretch out my hand against you to kill you. Surely I fear Allâh, the *Rabb* of the worlds:

**29** I would rather that you should bear the sin against me and thine own sin,<sup>a</sup> thus thou wouldst be of the companions of the Fire; and that is the recompense of the unjust.

**30** At length his mind made it easy for him to kill his brother, so he killed him; so he became one of the losers.

**31** Then Allâh sent a crow scratching the ground to show him how to cover the dead body of his brother.<sup>a</sup> He said: Woe is me! Am I not able to be as this crow and cover the dead body of my brother? So he became of those who regret.

**29a.** *Ithmî* here means not *my sin*, but *the sin committed against me*, i.e., *the sin of murder*; while by *Ithmî-ka* is meant *thy sin*, i.e., *his previous sin* on account of which his offering was not accepted. The righteous brother tells the wicked one that even after knowing that he intended to kill him he would not be the first to

raise his hand against him and kill him, but he would rather that the guilty one should go on adding to his sins.

**31a.** The Bible is silent on this point; but there is nothing improbable in primitive man learning from other creatures.

**32** For this reason We prescribed for the Children of Isrâ'îl that whoever kills a person, unless it be for manslaughter or for mischief in the land, it is as though he had killed all men. And whoever saves a life, it is as though he had saved the lives of all men.<sup>a</sup> And certainly Our messengers came to them with clear arguments, but even after that many of them commit excesses in the land.

**33** The only punishment of those who wage war against Allâh and His Messenger and strive to make mischief in the land<sup>a</sup> is that they should be murdered, or crucified, or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides, or they should be imprisoned.<sup>b</sup> This shall be a disgrace for them in this world, and in the Hereafter they shall have a grievous chastisement.

**32a.** The reference is generally understood to be to the gravity of the crime of murder, requiring the execution of the criminal. But by the killing of a person may as well be meant the killing of the Prophet, who had come to establish righteousness. The killing of that great teacher of righteousness was indeed equivalent to the killing of all men and the saving of the life of that great Saviour of humanity was equivalent to saving humanity itself. The reference is to the Jewish plots against the life of the Holy Prophet, and that is the reason for mentioning here the Israelites in particular.

**33a.** The words used here imply originally all those opponents of Islâm who waged war on the Muslims and made mischief in the land by causing loss to the life and property of innocent Muslims who fell into their hands. But it has generally been accepted as including all dacoits and murderers who cause disorder in a settled state of society. In fact, when war came to an end in Arabia and the kingdom of Islâm was established over the whole peninsula, the enemies of Islâm, being unable to oppose its authority openly, resorted to dacoity and murder to disturb the peace which was now established in the land. Hence, though it is such



enemies that are primarily spoken of here, the words are general and include all cases of murder and dacoity.

The punishment described is of four kinds, which clearly shows that the punishment to be inflicted in any particular case would depend upon the circumstances of the case, as well as the time and place where the crime was committed. For instance, if murder has been committed in the course of dacoity, the punishment would include the execution of the culprit, which may take the form of crucifixion if the offence is so heinous or the culprit has caused such terror in the land that the leaving of his body on the cross is necessary as a deterrent. In other cases, the punishment may be imprisonment, where the severer punishment of cutting off of hands is deemed unnecessary. The judge would take all the circumstances into consideration and inflict such punishment as he thought necessary. A particular case dealt with under this verse was that of a tribe called ‘Urainah. Some men of this tribe came to the Prophet, and accepted Islâm. They fell ill and were sent by the Prophet to a place at a little distance from Madînah for change of climate and recovery of health. But when they regained health, they killed the very people who had served them and went off with their camels. Then they committed dacoities and violated the chastity of women, and they were severely punished (Bukhârî 4:66, and the comments on it in ‘*Ainî*). Many other cases of this nature are recorded by II.

**34** Except those who repent before you overpower them;<sup>a</sup> so know that Allâh is Forgiving, Merciful.

**33b.** *Yunfau min-al-ard* literally means *they should be banished from the earth*, but according to Imâm Abû Hanîfah the meaning here is imprisonment (*al-habs*), and most lexicologists accept this (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî). *Lisân al-‘Arab* (Dictionary), by ‘Allâmah Abu-l-Faḍl Jamâl al-Dîn Muḥammad ibn Mukarram also accepts the interpretation that they should be kept in the prison. The reason is apparent. No one can be banished from the whole of the earth unless he is kept in prison. Deportation is included if we take *al-ar’* as meaning a particular country.

**34a.** This verse speaks of people the course of whose life has been changed before they are caught — those who repent before you overpower them. Repentance, of course, here means a changed course of life which is apparent to all. It clearly refers only to cases in which an enemy, who is guilty of crimes against life and property, becomes a Muslim before he falls into the hands of the Muslims. He should not be tried and punished for what he did when he was in the hostile camp.

## SECTION 6: Punishment of Offenders

**35** O you who believe, keep your duty to Allâh, and seek means of nearness to Him, and strive hard in His way that you may be successful.

**36** Those who disbelieve, even if they had all that is in the earth, and the like of it with it, to ransom themselves therewith from the chastisement of the day of Resurrection, it would not be accepted from them; and theirs is a painful chastisement.

**37** They would desire to come forth from the Fire, and they will not come forth from it, and theirs is a lasting chastisement.

**38** And (as for) the man and the woman addicted to theft, cut off their hands as a punishment for what they have earned, an exemplary punishment from Allâh. And Allâh is Mighty, Wise.<sup>a</sup>

**38a.** The cutting off of hands may be taken metaphorically or literally. You say *qata 'a lisâna-hû*, lit., he cut off his tongue, when you mean he silenced him (*Lisân al-'Arab* (Dictionary), by 'Allâmah Abu-l-Faḍl Jamâl al-Dîn Muḥammad ibn Mukarram). If therefore *qat' yad* is taken metaphorically, it would simply mean restraining the thief by imprisonment or otherwise. If taken literally, the hand may not be cut off for every theft, and this is a fact recognized by all jurists. What however I would particularly stress is the fact that the cutting off of the hand is the maximum punishment. As stated above in 33a, in the case of dacoity the maximum punishment is death and the minimum punishment is imprisonment. Now theft is not as serious a crime as dacoity, and hence the minimum punishment for theft could not be severer than the minimum punishment for dacoity. In the

case of dacoity, going upward in point of severity, the punishment is imprisonment, then cutting off of hands and feet, then death. Therefore what the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân states here is only the maximum punishment for theft, the minimum punishment remaining the same, i.e. imprisonment.

It is moreover clear from verse 33 that the infliction of the severer or the milder punishment depends upon the circumstances of the case and the opinion of the judge. The crime of dacoity becomes severer or milder according to the loss of life or property that the victims of dacoity suffer. In theft, the loss is only caused to property and not to life and therefore death as a punishment in this case is eliminated, while the next grade of punishment, the cutting off of the hand, is retained as the maximum punishment, and maximum punishment would depend only on the exigency of the case. It may be the seriousness of the crime or the seriousness of the offender's addiction to the crime of theft that may call for the maximum punishment. Therefore generally the maximum punishment may be inflicted only in cases of habitual theft. The considerations which entitle us to make this distinction are as follows: (a) The punishment is called exemplary, and exemplary punishment could only be inflicted where the crime is very serious or the offender is a habitual criminal. (b) The punishment is not to be inflicted if the offender repents and turns from his evil course. The next verse shows that the punishment of cutting off the hand is only for a criminal who does not reform, i.e. for the habitual offender. Moreover, what is required is repentance and reform. To give a man a chance to reform it is necessary that he should be given freedom of action before the more serious punishment is inflicted. (c) The punishment of the cutting off of hands has been mentioned in connection with the more serious crimes spoken of in v. 33, while even those serious crimes may be punished with imprisonment only, and therefore mere stealing, which is by no means as serious an offence as dacoity, need not be punished always with the severer punishment of the cutting off of the hand.

It is true that the cutting off of the hand even for a first crime is reported in the Hadîth, but this may be due to the particular circumstances of the society at the time. It is for the judge to decide when to inflict the maximum punishment and when not. According to some Hadîth, the hand was cut off when the amount stolen

was one-quarter of a dînâr; according to others when it was one dînâr or more (AD. 37:12; Ns. 46:7). According to one Hadîth the hand was not to be cut off when a theft was committed in the course of a journey (AD. 37:19). There are Hadîth showing that the hand was not to be cut off for stealing fruit on a tree (AD. 37:13). The cutting off of the hand is also prohibited in the case of criminal misappropriation (AD. 37:14). Marwân had a person flogged for stealing young palm trees (AD. 37:13). Another Hadîth states that when a certain person stole another's mantle valued at 30 dirhams from underneath his head, the owner of the mantle offered to sell the same to the person who had stolen it, and the Holy Prophet approved of this arrangement (AD. 37:15). In conclusion, I may add that I translate the word *al-sâriq* as meaning *one addicted to theft*, not only for the reasons given above but also because an explanatory reading of this word is *al-sarriq*, which is an *ism mubâlaghah*, i.e., a noun of intensiveness, from the same root.

**39** But whoever repents after his wrongdoing and reforms, Allâh will turn to him (mercifully). Surely Allâh is Forgiving, Merciful.

**40** Know you not that Allâh is He to Whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth? He chastises whom He pleases, and forgives whom He pleases. And Allâh is Possessor of power over all things.

**41** O Messenger, let not those grieve you who hasten to disbelief, from among those who say with their mouths, We believe, and their hearts believe not, and from among those *who became Jews* — they are listeners for the sake of a lie, listeners for another people who have not come to thee.<sup>a</sup> They alter the words after they are put in their (proper) places, saying: If you are given this, take it, and if you are not given this, be cautious. And he for whom Allâh intends temptation, thou control naught for him against Allâh. Those are they whose hearts Allâh intends not to purify. For them is disgrace in this world and for them a grievous chastisement in the Hereafter.

**42** Listeners for the sake of a lie, devourers of forbidden things, so if they come to thee, judge between them or turn away from them. And if thou turn away from

them, they cannot harm thee at all. And if thou judge, judge between them with equity. Surely Allâh loves the equitable.<sup>a</sup>

**41a.** The meaning is that they listen, but their object is only to invent lies and to give false reports to people who have not come to the Prophet. The words can also bear the interpretation that they listen only to the lies uttered by their rabbis, who have not come to thee. In fact, they were acting only as spies.

**43** And how do they make you a judge and they have the *Taurât* wherein is Allâh's judgment? Yet they turn away after that! And these are not believers.<sup>a</sup>

## SECTION 7: The Qur'ân and Previous Scriptures

**44** Surely We revealed the *Taurât*, having guidance and light.<sup>a</sup> By it did the prophets who submitted themselves (to Allâh) judge *those who became Jews*, and the rabbis and the doctors of law, because they were required to guard the Book of Allâh,<sup>b</sup> and they were witnesses thereof. So fear not the people and fear Me, and take not a small price for My messages. And whoever judges not by what Allâh has revealed, those are the disbelievers.<sup>c</sup>

**42a.** By the agreement drawn up between the various nationalities of Madînah on the advent of the Holy Prophet there (see 2:84a), all disputes were to be referred to the Holy Prophet, but the Jews had by this time become so inimical to the Prophet that he is allowed to refuse to judge between them. In case he judged between them, he is still told to judge with equity. To be equitable notwithstanding the severest enmity of the Jews and notwithstanding the knowledge that they were always plotting with the enemies of Islâm for its extirpation, shows that the Prophet had reached the highest point of moral rectitude to which man can attain.

**43a.** The Divine judgment in the *Taurât* referred to here may either imply the Divine injunctions in the *Taurât*, which the Jews refused to follow, or the prophecies of the advent of the Holy Prophet, which they refused to accept.

**44a.** Verses 44-47 are supposed by Christian critics to be evidence of the purity of the text of the *Taurât* and the *Injîl*. This is not true. That the *Taurât* was a Divine revelation containing light and guidance has never been denied. What is denied is that that light and guidance were kept intact throughout the ages. It is further denied that these two books were meant for the whole world and for all ages. They certainly contained light and guidance, but only for one people — the Isrâ'îlites, and for a limited time. Notwithstanding the light and guidance contained in the *Taurât*, the *Injîl* was sent down for the Isrâ'îlite people, which show clearly that the light and guidance contained in the *Taurât* were not considered sufficient even for the Isrâ'îlites for all ages, to say nothing of other nations.

**45** And We prescribed to them in it that life is for life, and eye for eye, and nose for nose, and ear for ear, and tooth for tooth, and for wounds retaliation.<sup>a</sup> But whoso forgoes it, it shall be an expiation for him.<sup>b</sup> And whoever judges not by what Allâh has revealed, those are the wrongdoers.

**46** And We sent after them in their footsteps 'Îsâ, son of Maryam, verifying that which was before him of the *Taurât*; and We gave him the *Injîl* containing guidance and light, and verifying that which was before it of the *Taurât*, and a guidance and an admonition for the dutiful.<sup>a</sup>

**44b.** The statement made here is that the masters of Divine knowledge and the doctors “were required to guard the Book of Allâh”, *i.e.* the *Taurât*. The Qur'ân does not say that they were actually successful in doing so. On the other hand, alteration of those books is clearly spoken of in 2:75 and 2:79. As against this, the guarding of the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân is spoken of as the work of God Himself; see 15:9: “Surely We have revealed the Reminder, and surely We are its Guardian.”

**44c.** It should be borne in mind that by judging is not meant only the judging of civil or criminal cases, but judging in all matters of the way of life as prescribed by Allâh, so that those who did not judge the revelation of the Holy Prophet by what was revealed in the *Taurât* were disbelievers. And note that the adoption of the words what Allâh has revealed instead of the *Taurât* is not without

significance. It shows that the whole of the *Taurât* as existing then was not looked upon by the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân as being the Divine revelation.

**45a.** Compare Exodus 21:23–25, Leviticus 24:19–21.

**45b.** If a man forgoes his right to an act of reprisal against his brother, this shall be an expiation for any wrong he may have done.

**46a.** The description of the *Injîl* as containing light and guidance conveys them same significance as the similar statement regarding the *Taurât*, for which see 44a. In addition it is stated that the *Injîl* verified the *Taurât* notwithstanding the fact that it introduces many new doctrines in place of those given in the Mûsâic Law, as in the case of divorce, the law of reprisal, etc. This description of the *Injîl* clearly shows that by verification is meant only corroboration of the general principles and broad doctrines of the faith, such as the unity of Allâh and equitable dealing with men, or the declaration by one prophet of the truth of a previous prophet, as the declaration of the truth of Mûsâ by 'Îsâ and of both by the Holy Prophet. It is in this sense that the Qur'ân is spoken of as verifying the *Taurât* and the *Injîl*.

**47** And let the People of the *Injîl* judge by that which Allâh has revealed in it. And whoever judges not by what Allâh has revealed, those are the transgressors.

**48** And We have revealed to thee the Book with the truth, verifying that which is before it of the Book and a guardian over it,<sup>a</sup> so judge between them by what Allâh has revealed, and follow not their low desires, (turning away) from the truth that has come to thee. For everyone of you We appointed a law and a way.<sup>b</sup> And if Allâh had pleased He would have made you a single people, but that He might try you in what He gave you.<sup>c</sup> So vie one with another in virtuous deeds. To Allâh you will all return, so He will inform you of that wherein you differed;

**48a.** The Qur'ân is called *muḥaimin* or a guardian over all previous revelation, thus showing that whatever was of permanent value in the previous scriptures has been preserved in the Qur'ân. The previous books contained a light and guidance for the people for whom they were meant, and they were commanded to judge by

those books, but the Qur'ân is now the Book which judges all truth, wherever it may have been, and therefore is the only Book which should be followed.

**48b.** The appointment of a law and a way for everyone refers to the giving of different laws to different nations in accordance with their requirements before the revelation of the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân, which fulfilled the requirements of all nations and all ages. Thus the Qur'ân here recognizes the principle to which it refers frequently, that prophets were raised among every people, for which see particularly 10:47, 13:7, and 35:24.

**48c.** This is one significance. Man is placed above the whole of creation in that he has been granted discretionary powers so that he can choose to follow one path or another, as against the rest of creation, which must necessarily follow the laws to which it is subject. Hence, led by that discretion, men follow different ways, adopting different sects, whereas if man's very nature had been so made as to make him unable to use his discretionary powers, all men would have been a single people, but then man's better qualities, which give him preference over the rest of creation, would not have been manifested. The words may, however, also mean, if Allah pleases He will make you a single people. This would be a reference to the ultimate destiny of the human race. In fact all people are now growing to the consciousness that they are all but one nation.

**49** And that you should judge between them by what Allâh has revealed, and follow not their low desires, and be cautious of them lest they seduce you from part of what Allâh has revealed to you. Then if they turn away, know that Allâh desires to afflict them for some of their sins. And surely many of the people are transgressors.

**50** Is it then the judgment of ignorance that they desire? And who is better than Allâh to judge for a people who are sure?

## **SECTION 8: Relations of Muslims with Enemies**



**51** O you who believe, take not the Jews and the Christians for friends. They are friends of each other. And whoever amongst you takes them for friends he is indeed one of them. Surely Allâh guides not the unjust people.<sup>a</sup>

**52** But you see those in whose hearts is a disease, hastening towards them, saying: We fear lest a calamity should befall us.<sup>a</sup> Maybe Allâh will bring the victory or a commandment from Himself, so they will regret what they hid in their *nafs*.<sup>b</sup>

**51a.** All non-believers, whatever their own differences, had made common cause against Islâm; this is what is meant by their being friends of each other. The Muslims are warned that they should not expect help or friendship from any party of them, whether Jews, Christians, or idolaters. It would have been weakness of faith in the ultimate triumph of Islâm if, from fear of a powerful enemy, they had sought help and friendship here and there among a hostile people, as the next verse shows. When two nations are at war, an individual of one nation having friendly relations with the enemy nation is treated as an enemy; that is exactly what the Qur'ân says here.

**52a.** By hastening towards them is meant hastening to make friendship with them or seeking their help. The hypocrites did this, fearing a Muslim reverse.

**53** And those who believe will say: Are these they who swore by Allâh with their most forcible oaths that they were surely with you? Their deeds will bear no fruit, so they will be losers.<sup>a</sup>

**54** O you who believe, should anyone of you turn back from his religion, then Allâh will bring a people, whom He loves and who love Him, humble towards the believers, mighty against the disbelievers, striving hard in Allâh's way and not fearing the censure of any censurer. This is Allâh's grace — He gives it to whom He pleases. And Allâh is Ample-giving, Knowing.<sup>a</sup>

**55** Only Allâh is your Friend and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, and they bow down.<sup>a</sup>

**52b.** By *victory* is meant a victory for the Muslims, and the reference is clearly to the conquest of Makkah. It shows that these verses were revealed before the

conquest of Makkah in the year 8 A.H. The reference in *amr* or *commandment* is evidently to the establishment of the Kingdom of Islâm, by which is meant the dominance of Islâm, there being a further reference to the spiritual conquests of Islâm in v. 54, for which see 54a.

**53a.** This was a prophecy that what the hypocrites were doing in opposition to the Prophet would prove of no effect. They would not be able to achieve the end which they had in view, and instead of bringing any loss to the Prophet they themselves would be the losers.

**54a.** The Muslims were severely persecuted while at Makkah and their troubles at Madînah increased tenfold owing to the presence of warring tribes on all sides. Yet they faced all these hardships with the greatest perseverance, and cases of apostasy were rare. In 6 A.H. Heraclius asked Abû Sufyân, who was then the leader of hostilities against the Prophet: “Does anyone of them apostatize out of hatred for his religion?” Abû Sufyân reply was, No. Again he asked him: Are they increasing or decreasing? Abû Sufyân said; “They are increasing in numbers” (Bukhârî 1:1). It is a fact that apostasy never thinned the ranks of Islâm.

**55a.** After warning the weak-hearted against taking their enemies for friends, the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân now tells them who is their real friend who can help them in their distresses and difficulties. Allâh is really the only Friend of a believer; only He can come to his help in time of need. But there was Allâh’s Messenger among them and if Allâh was a believer’s true Friend, so was His Messenger, whose heart was full of sincerest sympathy for the true believers.

**56** And whoever takes Allâh and His Messenger and those who believe for friend — surely the party of Allâh, they shall triumph.

## SECTION 9: The Mockers

**57** O you who believe, take not for friends those who take your way of life as prescribed by Allâh as a mockery and a sport, from among those who were given the Book before you and the disbelievers; and keep your duty to Allâh if you are believers.<sup>a</sup>

**58** And when you call to prayer they take it as a mockery and a sport. That is because they are a people who understand not.

**59** Say: O People of the Book, do you find fault<sup>a</sup> with us for aught except that we believe in Allâh and in that which has been revealed to us and that which was revealed before, while most of you are transgressors?

**60** Say: Shall I inform you of those worse than this in retribution from Allâh? They are those whom Allâh has cursed and upon whom He brought His wrath and of whom He made apes and swine, and who serve the (*tâghût*) “devil”. These are in a worse plight and further astray from the straight path.<sup>a</sup>

**57a.** The Muslims were prohibited from having friendly relations with those who mocked their religion and their Prophet. Friendship with such people would indeed have led to a similar bent of mind.

**59a.** *Naqama* followed by *min* means he found fault with (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur’ân* (Dictionary of Qur’ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain *al-Râghib al-Isfahânî*).

**61** And when they come to you, they say, We believe, and surely they come in unbelief and they go forth in it. And Allâh knows best what they conceal.

**62** And you see many of them vying one with another in sin and transgression, and their devouring illegal gain. Certainly evil is that which they do.<sup>a</sup>

**63** Why do not the rabbis and the doctors of law prohibit them from their sinful utterances and their devouring unlawful gain? Certainly evil are the works they do.

**64** And the Jews say: The hand of Allâh is tied up. Their own hands are shackled and they are cursed for what they say. Nay, both His hands are spread out.<sup>a</sup> He disburses as He pleases. And that which has been revealed to thee from thy Lord will certainly make many of them increase in inordinacy and disbelief. And We have cast among them enmity and hatred till the day of Resurrection. Whenever they kindle a fire for war Allâh puts it out, and they strive to make mischief in the land.<sup>b</sup> And Allâh loves not the mischief-makers.

**60a.** Those who are spoken of as having been made apes and swine are the Jews. See 2:65*b* as explaining the significance of these words. It is remarkable that, though the people spoken of here are in both places the same, they are on one occasion called simply apes and on the other apes and swine. In addition, the same people are here spoken of as serving the devil. The concluding words that the people who were thus made apes and swine and the servants of the (*tâghût*) “devil” are “in a worse plight and further astray from the straight path”, are conclusive as establishing the fact that they were still men, because apes and swine could not be said to be straying from the straight path. The next verse makes this plainer, for these very apes and swine are there described as coming to the Messenger with unbelief and going away with unbelief.

**62a.** *Suht* signifies any property that is forbidden, not lawful to be gained (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). It is also applied to a bribe (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharrîb al-Qur’ân* (Dictionary of Qur’ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain *al-Râghib al-Isfahânî*).

**64a.** The Muslims as a community were mostly poor people who accepted the truth. Moreover, they had left their property at Makkah. The Madînah Muslims were an agricultural community and naturally not rich. The Jews on the other hand carried on business and their usurious transactions had made them very rich, hence they taunted the Muslims, saying that Allâh’s hand was fettered. Compare also 3:181 and see 3:181*a*. The words — both His hands are spread out — indicate that He will enrich the Muslims materially as well as devotionally.

**65** And if the People of the Book had believed and kept their duty We would certainly have removed from them their evils, and made them enter gardens of bliss.

**66** And if they had observed the *Taurât* and the *Injîl* and that which is revealed to them from their *Rabb*, they would certainly have eaten from above them and from beneath their feet. There is a party of them keeping to the moderate course; and most of them — evil is that which they do.<sup>a</sup>

## SECTION 10: Christian Deviation from the Truth

**67** O Messenger, deliver that which has been revealed to you from your *Rabb*; and if you do (it) not, you have not delivered His message. And Allâh will protect you from men. Surely Allâh guides not the disbelieving people.<sup>a</sup>

**64b.** It is clear from this that the Jews had a hand in the battles, which the Quraish waged against Islâm; in fact they gave them promises of help from within if they attacked Madînah; perhaps they also financed these wars. The casting of enmity among them may relate to the enmity between the Jews and the Christians, because both are again and again referred to in this chapter.

**66a.** If they had observed the *Taurât* and the *Injîl* which contained clear prophecies of the Prophet's advent, they would have believed in the revelation of the Qur'ân as well. The eating from above is in reference to spiritual blessings and eating from beneath their feet signifies the earthly provisions; i.e., they would have had abundance of both. The attitude of liberality adopted by Islâm towards even its most implacable foes is remarkable. Notwithstanding their strong enmity to Islâm, a party of the Jews and the Christians is described as *keeping to the moderate course*.

**68** Say: O People of the Book, you follow no good till you observe the *Taurât* and the *Injîl* and that which is revealed to you from your *Rabb*.<sup>a</sup> And surely that which has been revealed to thee from your *Rabb* will make many of them increase in inordinacy and disbelief; so grieve not for the disbelieving people.

**69** Surely those who believe and those who became Jews and the Sabians and the Naṣārâh (those that made a man from Nazareth a God) — whoever believes in Allâh and the Last Day and does good — they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve.

**70** Certainly We made a covenant with the Children of Isrâ'îl and We sent to them messengers. Whenever a messenger came to them with that which their *nafs* (inner-self) desired not, some (of them) they called liars and some they (even) sought to kill.

**67a.** In Makkah the Prophet's only enemies were the Quraish. His flight to Madînah increased the difficulties tenfold. The Jews were a powerful nation, and a little plain speaking had made them the most dreadful enemies. Similar was the case of the Christians. The other tribes of Arabia had also, by this time, been successfully excited by the Quraish to side with them. The promise is therefore given that the Prophet will remain under Divine protection as against the innumerable dangers that threatened him from all quarters and the numerous plots against his life. But there is also a reference here to the Prophet's spiritual protection. Commenting on this verse, the *Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî says: "The 'ismat, or protection, of the prophets is Allâh's protection of them, in the first place, by characterizing them with purity of essences (i.e. creating them pure from every sin in their very nature), then by granting them bodily as well as spiritual excellence, then by granting them help and keeping them firm (in trials), then by sending down tranquility upon them and by the protection of their hearts (against evil)". *Rûh al-Ma'ânî* (Commentary), by Abu-l-Fadl Shahâb al-Dîn al-Sayyid Mahmûd al-Alûsî also gives a similar explanation and says that their protection means their protection from sins from among all people.

**68a.** This is a very severe condemnation of the contention of the Jews and the Christians. They had not preserved the Torah and the Gospel in their purity, and whatever remained of the original teachings of the prophets they did not act upon it, nor did they care for the prophecies which their own Books contained.

**71** And they thought that there would be no affliction,<sup>a</sup> so they became blind and deaf; then Allâh turned to them (mercifully) but many of them (again) became blind and deaf.<sup>b</sup> And Allâh is Seer of what they do.

**72** Certainly they disbelieve who say: Allâh, He is the Masîh, son of Maryam. And the Masîh said: O Children of Isrâ'îl, serve Allâh, my Rabb and your Rabb.<sup>a</sup> Surely whoever associates (others) with Allâh, Allâh has forbidden to him the Garden and his abode is the Fire. And for the wrongdoers there will be no helpers.

**73** Certainly they disbelieve who say: Allâh is the third of the three.<sup>a</sup> And there is no Deity but One Deity. And if they desist not from what they say, a painful chastisement will surely befall such of them as disbelieve.<sup>b</sup>

**71a.** Although they had been repeatedly warned of the afflictions which would befall them, they still thought that, being a favoured nation, they would not suffer punishment for their evil deeds. They had been subjected to great sufferings at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian rulers who followed him, large numbers having been slain and the rest taken prisoners. And again they suffered at the hands of Titus. See verse 78 where this affliction is spoken of as coming after David and Jesus.

**71b.** Allâh's turning mercifully to them signifies the advent of "Jesus", and their becoming blind and deaf a second time refers to their rejection of him.

**72a.** "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10).

**73a.** The well-known Christian doctrine of the Trinity is here plainly referred to. It should be noted that the name of Mary is never mentioned in connection with the doctrine of the Trinity. But as the Christians, especially the Roman Catholics, invested Maryam with Divine character, as being the mother of God, the Qur'ân often mentions her along with 'Îsâ as being an ordinary mortal.

**73b.** If the Jews were punished on account of their rejecting the prophets, the Christians are here told that punishment is also in store for them for their going to the other extreme in raising a mortal to the dignity of Godhead. The doctrine of the Atonement has slowly and gradually made the Christian world forget God altogether, and material advancement and the acquisition of worldly power has become their only concern. They first sought to subjugate the whole world, and, having done that, they are now seeking to overpower each other. Their mutual hatred and enmity as a punishment for their violation of the covenant of God has been already clearly spoken of in verse 14, and again in verse 64, as also in an earlier revelation: "And on that day We shall let some of them surge against others" (18:99).

**74** Will they not then turn to Allâh and ask His forgiveness? And Allâh is Forgiving, Merciful.

**75** The Masîh, son of Maryam, was only a messenger; messengers before him had indeed passed away. And his mother was a truthful woman. They both used to eat food.<sup>a</sup> See how We make the messages clear to them! Then behold, how they are turned away!

**76** Say: Do you serve besides Allâh that which controls for you neither harm nor good? And Allâh — He is the Hearing, the Knowing.

**77** Say: O People of the Book, exaggerate not in the matter of your way of life as prescribed by Allâh unjustly, and follow not the low desires of people who went astray before and led many astray, and went astray from the right path.<sup>a</sup>

#### SECTION 11: Christian Nearness to Islâm

**78** Those who disbelieved from among the Children of Isrâ'îl were cursed by the tongue of Dâwûd and 'Îsâ, son of Maryam. This was because they disobeyed and exceeded the limits.<sup>a</sup>

**75a.** Feeling hungry and partaking of food shows that both 'Îsâ and his mother were ordinary mortals. Every living thing needs food; it is only the Supreme Being Who has no need of it. As 'Îsâ is clearly spoken of as eating food while alive, he could not remain alive without food, and this verse thus negatives the allegation that 'Îsâ is still alive.

**77a.** The *ghuluww* or exaggeration spoken of here refers to the Christian doctrine raising a mortal to the dignity of Godhead. The Christians are here told that in making this doctrine the basis of their religion they have only followed an erroneous doctrine preached by a people before them. Recent criticism has shown that the Christians have only followed previous idolatrous nations in ascribing a son to God. This subject has been fully discussed in *The Sources of Christianity* by the late Khwâja Kamâl ud-Dîn.



**79** They forbade not one another the hateful things they did. Evil indeed was what they did.

**80** You see many of them befriending those who disbelieve. Certainly evil is that which their *nafsuhum* send before for them, so that Allâh is displeased with them, and in chastisement will they abide.

**81** And if they believed in Allâh and the Prophet<sup>a</sup> and that which is revealed to him, they would not take them for friends, but most of them are transgressors.

**82** You will certainly find the most violent of people in enmity against the believers to be the Jews and the idolators; and you will find the nearest in friendship to the believers to be those who say, We are Nasârâh. That is because there are priests and monks among them and because they are not proud.<sup>a</sup>

**78a.** After Mûsâ, Dâwûd and ‘Îsâ, who represent the highest achievement of Isrâ’îlite prophethood in temporal and devotional glory, spoke of the advent of the Holy Prophet in unmistakable terms. The curse is used here in its original sense of being removed further off from Divine mercy. The prophets had warned their people and ‘Îsâ warned the Jews that their transgressions called for Divine punishment, which should soon overtake them if they did not mend their ways. The time of both was followed by a great affliction overtaking the Jews, in the respective depredations of the Babylonian kings and the destruction wrought by Titus.

**81a.** By *al-Nabî* or the Prophet in the Qur’ân is always meant the Holy Prophet Muḥammad, and he is often spoken of and addressed as *al-Nabî* or *al-Rasûl*, the Prophet or the Messenger. In fact, he is referred to as the Prophet or that Prophet in earlier prophecy as well (John 1:21, 25). The Jews professed belief in the Unity of Allâh, yet they made a common cause with the idolatrous Quraish to uproot Islâm, which was a way of life as prescribed by Allâh of pure monotheism.

## **Part 7**

**83** And when they hear that which has been revealed to the Messenger you see their eyes overflow with tears because of the truth they recognize. They say: Our *Rabb*, we believe, so write us down with the witnesses.<sup>a</sup>

**84** And what (reason) have we that we should not believe in Allâh and in the Truth that has come to us, while we earnestly desire that our *Rabb* should cause us to enter with the righteous people?

**85** So Allâh rewarded them for what they said, with Gardens where-in rivers flow to abide in them. And that is the reward of the doers of good.

**82a.** The Christians were nearer to Islâm than the Jews, not only because the Muslims accepted Jesus Christ as a prophet of God, but because there were still among them many people who feared and worshipped God — there were priests and monks among them as the verse says. It is a fact that the Christian attitude towards Islâm was never as inimical as the Jewish. The Negus, Emperor of Abyssinia, accepted Islâm when he came to know of it through the Muslim emigrants in that country. Heraclius was favourably disposed towards it; even the Christian deputation of Najrân towards the end of the Prophet's life was so impressed with the Prophet's arguments that it decided not to have a *mubâhalah* with him. But the words here are more of a prophetic nature, and it is a fact that in the early history of Islâm, the Christians in Egypt, in North Africa, in Syria, in Persia and other countries, accepted Islâm in very large numbers, so that many of those communities became Muslims entirely or predominantly. At present, too, when Islâm is being presented to the West, the Christians are receiving the message with an open heart.

**83a.** This refers to the Christians who believed. An important personage belonging to this class was the Negus of Abyssinia, in whose dominions the Muslims found shelter in the early days of the Prophet's mission, when compelled to flee from Makkah on account of the severe persecutions of the Quraish. Even there they were followed by a deputation of the persecutors, who, in order to excite the religious hatred of the Christian monarch against the homeless Muslims, represented to the Negus that the fugitives not only denounced the idols of the Arabs but also spoke disparagingly of "Jesus Christ". Whereupon, the Muslims

being called upon to answer the charge, their leader read out the portion of the chapter “Mary” dealing with Jesus Christ, and the words so impressed the Negus that he wept, and said that Jesus Christ was not one whit more than the Qur’ân described him to be. That he subsequently became a true convert to Islâm is clearly shown by a funeral service having been held for him by the Holy Prophet when news of his death reached Madînah (Bukhârî 23:4).

**86** And those who disbelieve and reject Our messages, such are the companions of the flaming fire.

## **SECTION 12: A Warning – Besetting Sins of Previous People**

**87** O you who believe, forbid not the good things which Allâh has made lawful for you and exceed not the limits. Surely Allâh loves not those who exceed the limits.<sup>a</sup>

**88** And eat of the lawful and good (things) that Allâh has given you, and keep your duty to Allâh, in Whom you believe.

**89** Allâh will not call you to account for that which is vain in your oaths, but He will call you to account for the making of deliberate oaths; so its expiation<sup>a</sup> is the feeding of ten poor men with the average (food) you feed your families with, or their clothing, or the freeing of a neck. But whoso finds not (means) should fast for three days. This is the expiation of your oaths when you swear. And keep your oaths.<sup>b</sup> Thus does Allâh make clear to you His messages that you may give thanks.

**87a.** These words not only denounce such self-denying practices as those adopted by the Christian monks, spoken of in the last section, but also the act of depriving oneself of Divine blessings by falling into evil and slothful habits. Thus, while the Muslims are told on the one hand not to follow the self-imposed restrictions of the Christians, they are at the same time warned that they can enjoy Divine blessings only so long as they strive arduously for them.

**89a.** It is wrong to suppose that this verse sanctions the expiation of all kinds of oaths. Reading it along with the previous verses shows that the oaths referred to are in relation to vows, etc., by which one forbids oneself what is otherwise lawful. The injunction at the end of this verse, keep your oaths, also shows that oaths cannot be violated generally, and therefore expiation is only allowed in the case of oaths by which a man deprives himself of some lawful thing or of an occasion of virtue, as in 2:226. It is further evident that the Book which lays stress upon the faithful performance of all kinds of engagements could not allow the violating of agreements which had been confirmed with oaths.

**90** O you who believe, intoxicants and games of chance and (sacrificing to) stones set up and (dividing by) arrows<sup>a</sup> are only uncleanness, of the *shaitân*'s work; so shun it that you may succeed.<sup>b</sup>

**91** The *shaitân* desires only to create enmity and hatred among you by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you back from the remembrance of Allâh and from prayer. Will you then keep back?<sup>a</sup>

**92** And obey Allâh and obey the Messenger and be cautious. But if you turn back then know that the duty of Our Messenger is only a clear deliverance of the message.

**93** On those who believe and do good there is no blame for what they eat,<sup>a</sup> when they keep their duty and believe and do good deeds, then keep their duty and believe, then keep their duty and do good (to others). And Allâh loves the doers of good.

**89b.** The phrase *ihfazû aimâna-kum* bears two interpretations. It means keep your oaths, i.e. be true to your oaths when you take them; and it also means guard your oaths, i.e. do not take oaths unless there is an urgent need.

**90a.** See verse 3, and 3b, 3c.

**90b.** This verse totally prohibits all intoxicants and games of chance; and besides, by classing them with sacrifices to stones set up for idols and dividing by arrows, subjects them to the prohibition of verse 3. It is related that when this verse was revealed a crier proclaimed in the streets of Madînah that wine was prohibited, and

in response to this every jar of wine in a Muslim house was emptied, so that wine flowed in the streets (Bukhârî 46:20). Never in the history of the world was such a deep-rooted evil as drink so suddenly yet so completely eradicated.

**91a.** Only one very clear reason is here given why intoxicants and games of chance are forbidden. Elsewhere it is clearly stated that in intoxicants and games of chance there are a great sin (2:219).

**93a.** The verse speaks of those who died before the prohibition came. But even if it be taken to refer to all believers, it would not justify doing what is unlawful, because one who believes, does good deeds, and keeps his duty will not approach any prohibited thing. In thrice mentioning belief and regard for duty, the reference is to the threefold duty of man, viz., to Allâh, to himself, and to others. Or, by the repetition of believing is meant carrying out belief into practice.

### SECTION 13: Inviolability of the Ka‘bah

**94** O you who believe, Allâh will certainly try you in respect of some game which your hands and your lances can reach, that Allâh may know who fears Him in secret. Whoever exceeds the limit after this, for him is a painful chastisement.

**95** O you who believe, kill not game while you are on pilgrimage.<sup>a</sup> And whoever among you kills it intentionally, the compensation thereof is the like of what he killed, from the cattle, as two just persons among you judge, as an offering to be brought to the Ka‘bah, or the expiation thereof is the feeding of the poor or equivalent of it in fasting, that he may taste the unwholesome result of his deed. Allâh pardons what happened in the past. And whoever returns (to it), Allâh will punish him. And Allâh is Mighty, Lord of Retribution.

**96** Lawful to you is the game of the sea<sup>a</sup> and its food,<sup>b</sup> a provision for you and for the travelers, and the game of the land is forbidden to you so long as you are on pilgrimage, and keep your duty to Allâh, to Whom you shall be gathered.

**95a.** The prohibition to kill game when on pilgrimage, mentioned in vv. 94–96, is a token of respect for the security of the Ka‘bah (see v. 97), in addition to being a measure necessary for the safety of life in such a large gathering.

**96a.** *Bahr* is used here in an extensive sense, and by the game of the sea is meant all water game, whether sea, river, pond, or lake.

**96b.** The *ta‘âm* (lit. food) of the sea is here distinguished from its game, and means what is found, the sea or the river having thrown it (on dry land) (Bukhârî 72:12), or what is left by the water having receded from it, for the catching of which no struggle is needed (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî). According to ‘Abd Allâh ibn ‘Abbâs (Companion), *ta‘âm* means what dies of itself in water — (it is allowed) unless it stinks (Bukhârî 72:12).

**97** Allâh has made the Ka‘bah,<sup>a</sup> the Sacred House, a means of support for the people,<sup>b</sup> and the sacred month and the offerings and the victims with garlands. That is that you may know that Allâh knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and that Allâh is Knower of all things.

**98** Know that Allâh is Severe in requiting (evil) and that Allâh is Forgiving, Merciful.

**99** The duty of the Messenger is only to deliver (the message). And Allâh knows what you do openly and what you hide.

**100** Say: The bad and the good are not equal, though the abundance of the bad may please thee. So keep your duty to Allâh, O men of understanding that you may succeed.

**97a.** *Ka‘bah*, from *ka‘ba*, meaning it swelled or became prominent, is so called because of its prominence, or it is a prophetic name showing that it shall forever have eminence in the world. *Al-Bait al-Ḥarâm* (The Sacred or Inviolable House) is also one of its names, and among the Arabs it was known as Bait Allâh, or the House of Allâh. The building proper is 55 feet by 50 feet, but the whole courtyard in which it stands measures 530 feet by 500 feet.

**97b.** This is a prophetic announcement that the Ka‘bah will forever remain a support or stay for men, where pilgrims will flock from all parts of the world. The

reference to this prophecy is elucidated in the concluding words: “That is that you may know that Allâh knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth”; that is, the fulfilment of this prophecy in all future ages will be a sign of the great knowledge of Allâh, Who pronounced it at a time when the Ka‘bah was hardly known beyond the environs of Arabia; see 3:97a.

#### SECTION 14: Some Directions for Muslims

**101** O you who believe, ask not about things which if made known to you would give you trouble; and if you ask about them when the Qur’ân is being revealed, they will be made known to you. Allâh pardons this; and Allâh is Forgiving, Forbearing.<sup>a</sup>

**102** A people before you indeed asked such questions, then became disbelievers therein.<sup>a</sup>

**103** Allâh has not ordained a *bahîrah* or a *sâ’ibah* or a *waşîlah* or a *hâmî*, but those who disbelieve fabricate a lie against Allâh. And most of them understand not.<sup>a</sup>

**101a.** As Islâm discouraged rigorous practices, such as monastic life, it also prohibited questions relating to details on many points which would require this or that practice to be made obligatory, and much was left to individual will or the circumstances of the time and place. The exercise of judgment occupies a very important place in Islâm and this gives ample scope to different nations and communities to frame laws for themselves to meet new and changed situations. The Hadîth shows that the Prophet also discouraged questions on details in which a Muslim could choose a way for himself (Bukhârî 3:28, 29).

**102a.** It does not refer to a particular people. The history of previous nations shows that the statement is generally true.

**103a.** The liberation of certain animals in honour of idols was a practice among the Arabs, and as Islâm uprooted every vestige of idolatry, this practice is condemned here. *Bahîrah* (from *bahara*, meaning *he cut* or *slit*) means *a she-*

*camel having her ear slit.* When a she-camel (according to some also a *ewe* or a *she-goat*) had brought forth five (or seven, or ten) young ones, the last of these, if a male, was slaughtered, but if a female, her ear was slit. According to others it was the mother; she being also exempted from slaughter and from carrying burdens (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane).

*Sâ'ibah* (from *sâba*, which means *it ran of itself*) signifies any beast left to pasture without attention. According to some, it was the mother of a *baḥîrah*, or a she-camel which, having brought forth females at ten successive births, was set at liberty to pasture where she would, and was not ridden nor was her milk taken (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane).

*Waṣīlah* (from *waṣala*, i.e. *he connected or joined*) means a *she-goat*, which brought forth twins, a male and a female; when the male was brought forth alone it was slaughtered to the idols, the female alone being kept. But in the case of the male and the female being born twins, the male was considered to be joined to the female, and was not therefore sacrificed to the deities (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî).

*Hâmî* (from *hamâ-hu*, i.e. *be prohibited or interdicted it or protected or guarded it*) means a *stallion-camel that has prohibited or interdicted his back* (to be used for bearing a rider or any burden). *That is left at liberty and not made any use of; whose offspring in the second degree of descent has been fertile* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane).

**104** And when it is said to them, ‘Come to that which Allâh has revealed and to the Messenger’, they say: Sufficient for us is that wherein we found our fathers. What! Even though their fathers knew nothing and had no guidance!

**105** O you who believe, take care of your souls — he who errs cannot harm you when you are on the right way. To Allâh you will all return, so He will inform you of what you did.

**106** O you who believe, call to witness between you, when death draws nigh to one of you, at the time of making the will, two just persons from among you, or two others from among others than you,<sup>a</sup> if you are travelling in the land and the calamity of death befalls you. You should detain them after the prayer. Then if you



doubt (them), they shall both swear by Allâh (saying): We will not take for it a price, though there be a relative nor will we hide the testimony of Allâh,<sup>b</sup> for then certainly we shall be sinners.

**106a.** The following story is related in connection with this verse. Two brothers, both Christians, Tamîm Dârî, and ‘Adî, were entrusted by their dying Muslim companion Budail, in Syria, with certain property to be made over to his relatives on their return to Madînah. The two brothers, however, stole a cup of silver, making over the remaining property; the relatives found a complete list disclosing the existence of the stolen cup of silver as being part of the original property and thus the evidence of the Christian brothers was shown to be false. This story abundantly proves that as late as the revelation of this chapter, Muslim and Christian relations were still friendly. It further demonstrates that the evidence of the followers of an alien religion is admissible according to the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân.

**106b.** “The testimony of Allâh” stands for the testimony, which Allâh has enjoined to be borne uprightly.

**107** If it be discovered that they are guilty of a sin, two others shall stand up in their place from among those against whom the first two have been guilty of a sin; so they shall swear by Allâh: Certainly our testimony is truer than the testimony of those two, and we have not exceeded the limit, for then surely we should be unjust.

**108** Thus it is more probable that they will give true testimony<sup>a</sup> or fear that other oaths will be taken after their oaths. And keep your duty to Allâh and hearken. And Allâh guides not the transgressing people.

## SECTION 15: Christian Love of this Life

**109** On the day when Allâh will gather together the messengers and say: What was the response you received? They will say, ‘We have no knowledge. Surely You are the great Knower of the unseen. <sup>a</sup>

**110** When Allâh will say: O ‘Îsâ, son of Maryam, remember My favour to you and to your mother, when I strengthened you with the (My) Divine revelation; you spoke to people in the cradle and in old age, and when I taught you the Book and the Wisdom and the *Taurât* and the *Injîl*, and when you did determine out of clay a thing like the form of a bird by My permission, **then you did breathe into it and it became a bird by My permission**; and you did heal the blind and the leprous by My permission; and when you did raise the dead by My permission;<sup>a</sup> and when I withheld the Children of Isrâ’îl from you when you came to them with clear arguments — but those of them who disbelieved said: This is nothing but clear enchantment.

**108a.** A statement is said to be ‘*alâ wajhi-hî*’ when it is made in a proper manner (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane, under *qass*). The word *wajh* means *face* as well as *drift*, *mode* or *course*. The giving of testimony ‘*ala wajhi-hâ*’ therefore means *giving it truly* or *according to facts*.

**109a.** The question is, ‘Did those to whom you were sent accept your message and remain true to it, or was it otherwise? The answer of the prophets is that only Allâh knew how their message was received, because they could not say how far its rejecters was guilty, nor how far the acceptors of the message remained true to it after their death.

**111** And when I revealed to the disciples, saying, Believe in Me and My messenger, they said: We believe and bear witness that we submit.

**112** When the disciples said: O ‘Îsâ, son of Maryam, is thy *Rabb* able to send down food to us from heaven?<sup>a</sup> He said, ‘Keep your duty to Allâh if you are believers.

**113** They said: We desire to eat of it, and that our hearts should be at rest, and that we may know that thou hast indeed spoken truth to us, and that we may be witnesses thereof.

**114** ‘Îsâ, son of Maryam, said: O Allâh, our *Rabb*, send down to us food from *samâ’*, which should be to us an ever-recurring happiness<sup>a</sup> to the first of us and

the last of us, and a sign from Thee, and give us sustenance and You are the Best of the sustainers.<sup>b</sup>

**110a.** For being strengthened with the (My) Divine Revelation, see 2:87a; for speaking in the cradle and in old age, as also for the significance of *kahl*, see 3:46a; for the miracles spoken of here, see 3:49a, 49b, 49c; for the withholding of the Isrâ'îlites, see 3:54b, 55a.

**112a.** *Mâ'idah* is from *mâda*, which has two meanings: (1) *it became in a state of motion*, and (2) *he conferred a benefit or favour on him*. According to the *Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî, *mâda-nî* means *he gave me food* and *mâ'idah* means both, *a table with food on it*, and *food*. It also means *knowledge*, because knowledge is the nutriment for hearts, as food is the nutriment for bodies (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî). A table without food is not called *mâ'idah* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane).

**114a.** The word '*Id* used here means *a festival*, the literal significance being *an ever-recurring happiness or source of enjoyment*.

**115** Allâh said: Surely I will send it down to you, but whoever disbelieves afterwards from among you, I will chastise him with a chastisement with which I will not chastise anyone among the nations.<sup>a</sup>

#### SECTION 16: False Doctrines introduced after 'Îsâ's Death

**116** And when Allâh will say: O 'Îsâ, son of Maryam, did you say to people, Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allâh?<sup>a</sup> He will say: Glory be to You! It was not for me to say what I had no right to (say). If I had said it, You would indeed have known it. You know what is in my mind, and I know not what is in Your mind. Surely You are the great Knower of the unseen.

**114b.** This passage seems to refer to the well-known prayer for *daily bread*, which Jesus appears to have included in the famous Lord's prayer on account of the earthly inclinations of his disciples. The food of earth has no doubt been granted in abundance to the Christians, but this has deprived them of the heavenly food. Compare the Muslim's prayer in the opening chapter, which craves not for bread but for the right path. The form of the prayer, that it should be *an ever-recurring happiness*, shows clearly that the prayer was not for a table laden with provisions, as is generally supposed. As to its being sent down from heaven, it should be borne in mind that, in the language of the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân, everything is with Allâh and is sent down to human beings. Compare 15:21: "And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We send it not down but in a known measure."

**115a.** This prophecy is being fulfilled before our eyes. The terrible calamities, which the two World Wars have brought to humanity, and especially to the Christian nations, are *unprecedented* in human history — *a chastisement with which I will not chastise anyone among the nations*. And what is this punishment due to? The calamities, which have befallen the world today, are due to the mad race for bread and for the wealth of this world. The neglect of the higher values of life and running blindly after material comforts has already brought to the world a ruin which it has never witnessed before, and nobody knows what catastrophe is yet in store for it.

**116a.** From this description of Mary being taken for a god by the Christians, some Christian critics of the Qur'ân conclude that the doctrine of the Trinity according to the Qur'ân consists of three persons — God, Jesus and Mary. But this is an absolutely unwarranted conclusion. Mary is no doubt spoken of as being taken for an object of worship by the Christians; but the doctrine of the Trinity is not mentioned here, while the Divinity of Mary is not mentioned where the Trinity is spoken of. The doctrine and practice of Mariolatry, as it is called by Protestant controversialists, is too well-known. In the catechism of the Roman Church the following doctrines are to be found: "That she is truly the mother of God, and the second Eve, by whose means we have received blessing and life; that she is the mother of Pity and very specially our advocate; that her images are of the utmost

utility” (Encyclopaedia Britannica 11th edition, volume 17, p. 813). It is also stated that her intercessions are directly appealed to in the Litany. And further that there were certain women in Thrace, Scythia, and Arabia who were in the habit of worshipping the virgin as a goddess, the offer of a cake being one of the features of their worship. “From the time of the council of Ephesus (held in 431 A.D.),” says the same writer, “to exhibit figures of the virgin and child became the approved expression of orthodoxy ... Of the growth of the Marian cultus, alike in the east and in the west, after the decision at Ephesus it would be impossible to trace the history ... Justinian in one of his laws bespeaks her advocacy for the Empire, and he inscribes the high altar in the new church of St. Sophia with her name. Narses looks to her directions on the field of battle. The Emperor Heraclius bears her image on his banner. John of Damascus speaks of her as the Sovereign lady to whom the whole creation has been made subject by her son. Peter Damian recognizes her as the most exalted of all creatures and apostrophizes her as deified and endowed with all power in heaven and in earth, yet not forgetful of our race.” The Christian world had in fact felt “the need for a mediator to deal with the very mediator”, and thus Mary was raised to the throne of Divinity along with Jesus. The recent proclamation of the Pope relating to the bodily assumption of Maryam supports this conclusion, and will raise a new question for the Christian world whether Trinity really consists of God, Jesus and Maryam?

**117** I said to them naught save as You did command me: Serve Allâh, my *Rabb* and your *Rabb*; and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when You did cause me to die You was the Watcher over them. And You are Witness of all things. *a*

**117a.** This verse is a conclusive proof that ‘Îsâ died a natural death, and is not now alive in the *samâ*’. Here ‘Îsâ says that so long as he was among his followers he was a witness of their condition, and he did not find them holding the belief in his Divinity. The logical conclusion of this statement is that the false doctrine of his Divinity was introduced into the Christian faith *after his death*, after “*You did cause me to die*”; see further 3:55a.

A saying of the Holy Prophet is recorded in which the Holy Prophet speaks concerning himself in the very words, which are here put into the mouth of ‘Îsâ. He said that he would be shown on the day of Resurrection some men who had gone against his teachings, and “I would say what the righteous servant said: I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when You did cause me to die, You was the Watcher over them” (Bukhârî 60:8). This saying shows clearly that as it was after the death of the Holy Prophet that his followers perverted his teachings, so it was after the death of ‘Îsâ that his followers perverted his teachings.

Compare John 17:3: “And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent”; and John 17:12; “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name”.

**118** If You chastise them, surely they are Your servants; and if You protect them, surely You are the Mighty, the Wise. *a*

**119** Allâh will say: This is a day when their truth will profit the truthful ones. For them are Gardens wherein flow rivers abiding therein forever. Allâh is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Allâh. That is the mighty achievement.

**120** Allâh’s is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and whatever is in them; and He is Possessor of power over all things.

**118a.** The words *taghfir la-hum* (*protect* or *forgive them*) refer to their final protection which will be granted to the Christian nations through acceptance of Islâm. If the forgiveness of sins was meant, the Divine attributes referred to would have been those speaking of forgiveness and mercy, as *al-Ghafûr*, *al-Rahîm*, i.e. Forgiving, Merciful. Instead of that the attributes referred to are *al-‘Azîz al-Hakîm*, or the Mighty, the Wise, which generally indicate that some great purpose would be achieved and a transformation would be brought about. Thus Sudî, one of the earliest commentators says, commenting on the words *taghfir la-hum*: “If Thou protect them and thus bring them over from Christianity to the guidance of Islâm” (IJ).

